

Sports

Saturday, August 31, 2024

JOURNALSTAR.COM/SPORTS

SECTION B

Finally, home is where the (start) is



KENNETH FERRIERA, JOURNAL STAR FILE PHOTO

No one on Nebraska's current roster has played a season opener at Memorial Stadium. That changes Saturday vs. UTEP.

Nebraska to open season at home for first time since '19

EVAN BLAND
Omaha World-Herald

The Nebraska buses will roll to a stop at the intersection of 14th and Vine at about 12:15 p.m. Saturday. Awaiting players and coaches from there is a four-minute walk to the team facility as throngs of fans cheer them on.

"Does it take four minutes for us?" coach Matt Rhule asked his chief of staff, Susan Elza, this



FOOTBALL SATURDAY
UTEP at Nebraska, 2:30 p.m.
TV: Fox. **Radio:** 1400, 98.1.

week. Four minutes and seven seconds, she replied.

The second-year head man gave a nod and a small smile. Home is where the start is — of a season where the Huskers will take every edge they can find.

A 2:30 kickoff against UTEP at Memorial Stadium won't much move the national needle. That's just fine for Nebraska after four

straight high-exposure road trips against Big Ten opponents all began seasons with Big Red gut punches. NU has spent the last three Labor Day weekends at 0-1.

What's the value of a Husker opener at home? No one on the current roster has played in one, not even offensive tackle Bryce Benhart whose 42nd career start Saturday will be the most ever by a Nebraska O-lineman. Only

Please see **FOOTBALL**, Page B2

■ **INSIDE:** Storylines, matchups and numbers to know for Huskers-Miners. **Page B6**

HUSKER VOLLEYBALL

Reilly's serves give NU big lift

Goosebumps. Starting lineup announcements at the Devaney Sports Center are always a must-watch. The electric hype video. The superstar-like treatment of Nebraska's starters with most of the lights off, save for a couple of spotlights and the large video boards.

The loud cheers for each and every member of the team? It's cool. It's always cool.

But the roar that came for sophomore outside hitter Harper Murray when she was announced? Phew. Goosebumps.

The applause for her, and Nebraska's All-American libero Lexi Rodriguez, were the loudest two on Friday.

If Murray didn't feel the support of Nebraska volleyball fans before, I hope she felt it then.

Moments after that, though, all business.

No. 2 Nebraska (2-0) made quick work of Texas A&M-Corpus Christi, sweeping the Islanders, 25-9, 25-20, 25-15, in the Huskers' home opener.

WHAT I LOVED

Bergen Reilly's serving

Bergen Reilly, my goodness. The sophomore setter usually gets it started at the service line for Nebraska, and she took residence there on Friday night to start Nebraska's match.

Reilly served 11 times in a row. Eleven. After the match, Reilly said she thinks that's her longest serving run ever.

In that run, she had three ace serves — including back-to-back aces to give Nebraska leads of 7-0 and 8-0.

Please see **JUST**, Page B5



KENNETH FERRIERA, JOURNAL STAR

Nebraska's Bergen Reilly (center) celebrates with her teammates against Texas A&M-Corpus Christi on Friday at the Devaney Sports Center.

GOOD TO BE HOME

'Fired up' Nebraska puts on show in '24 Devaney debut

BRENT C. WAGNER
Lincoln Journal Star

Nebraska won the first 10 points of the match as it swept Texas A&M-Corpus Christi 25-9, 25-20, 25-15 in its home opener Friday at the Devaney Sports Center.

Setter Bergen Reilly served the unreal start, including three ace serves.

In that rotation, the Huskers have Lindsay Krause, Rebekah Allick and Merritt Beason at the net — a group that can quickly overmatch many teams.

The opening run of points didn't end until Nebraska had a net violation on the 11th rally.

What a start to the first of 18 regular season home matches.

"It kind of just shows how fired up we all are for the season,"

LOOK: To see more photos from Friday's Nebraska volleyball match, point your smartphone camera at the QR code, then tap the link. **NEWSVU**

Krause said. "We weren't going to let anything drop."

Late in the set, Reilly was back at the serving line and served back-to-back aces. She had five aces in the first set, already topping her previous career high of four.

Nebraska topped the Islanders in kills (48-30), blocks (7-2) and ace serves (7-2).

Nebraska coach John Cook said it was a good first home match.

"You could feel the buzz in the arena," Cook said. "I thought Corpus Christi after the first 15 points

VOLLEYBALL FRIDAY
No. 2 Nebraska 3,
Texas A&M-Corpus Christi 0
(25-9, 25-20, 25-15)

played some really good volleyball. For their size, and what they do, they're very well coached. They cover (hitters) amazing, and they don't make errors."

Krause led the Huskers with 13 kills on .478 hitting.

Allick had kills on each of her first five attempts and finished with six kills on .600 hitting. Andi Jackson had seven kills and also hit .600.

Please see **VOLLEYBALL**, Page B5



JUSTIN WAN, JOURNAL STAR

Lincoln Christian's Truman Paulsen holds the Spirit Sword after defeating Lincoln Lutheran on Friday at Aldrich Field.

PREP FOOTBALL

Christian captures emotional win

Crusaders honor coach's wife, win Spirit Sword

CHRIS BASNETT
Lincoln Journal Star

They're all special when Lincoln Christian and Lincoln Lutheran meet on the football field. Friday night was even more so.

On a night when both teams played for Da'Nelle Earl, the wife of Lincoln Christian coach Kurt Earl, the Crusaders pulled away from a halftime tie for a 28-14 win in the Battle for the Spirit

LOOK: To see more photos from Friday's Spirit Sword game, point your smartphone camera at the QR code, then tap the link. **NEWSVU**

Sword.

Here are Chris Basnett's takes from the game.

An emotional night

Even 45 minutes before kickoff, this one felt different. Hundreds of people from both schools wore olive green shirts that read "No one fights alone"

to honor Da'Nelle Earl, who earlier this year was diagnosed with glioblastoma, an aggressive, terminal form of brain cancer.

Da'Nelle arrived at the game about 20 minutes before kickoff, and after getting a ride to the Christian side of the field on an ATV, met Kurt for a long embrace as warmups ended.

"I'll probably cry a lot tonight," she said from her seat in the bleachers.

She did, but there were so many good tears.

Please see **CHRISTIAN**, Page B4

Football
(CITY SCHOOLS' GAMES IN BOLD)
FRIDAY'S GAMES

Class A
Bellevue West 28, Omaha Central 27
Norfolk 35, Columbus 28, OT
Elkhorn South 38, Lincoln East 5
Fremont 49, Bellevue East 0
Kearney 20, North Platte 0
Lincoln Northeast 48, Omaha Northwest 0
Lincoln North Star at Lincoln Southwest
Lincoln Southeast 35, Grand Island 20
Millard North 29, Millard West 21
Millard South at Basha, Ariz.
Omaha Bryan 26, Lincoln High 7
Omaha Burke 62, Omaha Benson 0
Omaha Westview 52, Omaha South 16
Papillion-La Vista 29, Papillion-La Vista South 24
Plattsmouth 57, Omaha Buena Vista 0
South Sioux City at Sioux City North, IA
Class B
Bennington 23, Waverly 0
Blair 56, Lincoln Standing Bear 12
Elkhorn North 24, Lincoln Pius X 21
Holdrege 35, Lexington 27
McCook 56, Beatrice 6
Omaha Skutt 29, Norris 13
Ralston 44, Lincoln Northwest 0
Scottsbluff 31, GI Northwest 6
Seward 41, Gretna East 24
Torrington, Wyo. at Gering
York 17, Hastings 14
Class C-1
Ashland-Greenwood 7, DC West 3
Auburn 32, Mount Michael 7
Boys Town 50, Wilber-Clatonia 0
Central City at Ord
Chadron 28, Broken Bow 8
Columbus Lakeview 41, Omaha Gross 21
Fairbury 14, Superior 0
Falls City 42, Palmyra 14
Fort Calhoun 13, Arlington 0
Gordon-Rushville at Alliance
Gothenburg 35, Ogallala 22
Lincoln Christian 28, Lincoln Lutheran 14
Louisville 33, Schuyler 7
Milford 36, Syracuse 32
Omaha Concordia 26, Brownell Talbot 6
Omaha Roncalli 31, Wayne 12
O'Neill 28, Valentine 20
Pierce 41, Aurora 28
Scotus CC 14, Aquinas 7
Sidney 22, Cozad 13
Wahoo 62, Nebraska City 0
West Point-Beemer 26, Logan View/S-5 20
Yuma, Colo. at Chase County
Class C-2
Archbishop Bergan at Conestoga
Battle Creek 41, Cross County 0
Boone Central 14, Cedar Catholic 0
Doniphan-Trumbull 20, Amherst 17
Gibson 17, Hershey 14
Grand Island CC 41, Hastings SC 13
Kearney Catholic 19, St. Paul 7
Malcolm 34, North Bend Central 13
Norfolk Catholic 28, Bishop Neumann 21
Oakland-Craig 34, Yutan 14
Raymond Central 28, Fillmore Central 8
Tekamah-Herman at Ponca
Wheatland, Wyo. at Mitchell
Wood River 33, Centura 20
Class D-1
Arapahoe 44, Cambridge 14
Arcadia-LC 26, Hi-Line 15
Bancroft-Rosalie 34, Tri County NE 20
Boyd County at North Central
David City 64, Centennial 22
Creighton 58, Niobrara/Verdigre 16
Crofton 36, Wymot 12
EMF 50, Clarkson/Leigh 20
East Butler 84, Nebraska Lutheran 6
Guardian Angels CC 39, Laurel-CC 18
Hartington-Newcastle 54, Ainsworth 34
Homer at Lyons-Decatur NE
Class D-2
Archangels 54, Winside 8
BDS 38, Elmwood-Murdock 6



JUSTIN WAN JOURNAL STAR

Lincoln Christian's Dawson Thies (left) is tackled by Lincoln Lutheran's Trenton Kumm in the second half Friday at Aldrich Field.

Lourdes CC 60, Falls City SH 8
Maxwell 90, Sutherland 6
Morrill at Bayard
Neligh-Oakdale 56, Humphrey-Lindsay 28
North Platte SP 21, Bridgeport 8
Omaha Christian 54, Madison 0
Perkins County at Dundy Co.-Stratton
Plainview 32, Pender 21
Pleasanton 45, Elm Creek 20
Ravenna 60, Alma 14
Sandhills Valley 42, Mullen 22
Sandy Creek 60, Johnson-Brock 8
Shelby-RC 66, Freeman 24
Southern 62, HTRS 14
Stanton 42, Bloomfield 16
Summerland 60, NG/SE 8
Sutton 30, McCool Junction 28
Thayer Central 66, Heartland 6
Tri County 34, Johnson County Central 22
Twin River 54, Giltner 0
Wausa-Osmond 50, Wakefield 32
Weeping Water 16, Mead 14
Wisner-Pilger 52, Lutheran High NE 35
Class D-6
Arthur County 71, Wallace 20
Diller-Odel 37, Harvard 0
Fleming, Colo. at Leyton
Hampton 72, Parkview Christian 28
Hay Springs 28, Paxton 14
Lewiston 93, Santee 64
Meridian at Pawnee City
Silver Lake 13, Shelton 12
Sioux County 50, Banner County 6
South Platte at Wauneta-Palisade
Southwest 71, Heartland Lutheran 34
Sterling 40, Dorchester 8
Stuart 46, Cody-Kilgore 20

S-E-M 52, Ansley-Litchfield 20
SATURDAY'S GAME
Class A
Creighton Prep at DeSmet Jesuit, Mo.
THURSDAY'S RESULTS
Class A
Omaha Westside 22, Omaha North 7
Class B
Gretna 38, Elkhorn 28
Platteview 14, Crete 0
Class C-1
Minden 18, Adams Central 15
Class D-1
Franklin 56, Southern 8
South Loup 54, Hemingford 36
Hyannis 30, Kimball 12
West Holt 36, Elkhorn Valley 14
Class D-2
Hitchcock County 68, Brady 0
Maywood-Hayes Center 19, Wilcox-Hildreth 18
Sandhills/Theedford 58, Anselmo-Merna 16
Class D-6
Creek Valley 48, Minatare 6
Garden County 59, Crawford 13

Potter-Dix 62, Peetz, Colo. 43
ELKHORN SOUTH 38, LINCOLN EAST 5
Elkhorn South 3 21 7 7 - 38
Lincoln East 0 3 2 0 - 5
ES-Parks 28 FG
ES-Shanahan 24 run (Parks kick)
ES-Shanahan 6 run (Parks kick)
ES-Sutko 3 run (Parks kick)
LE-26 FG
LE-Team safety
ES-Tate 95 interception return (Parks kick)
ES-Shanahan 1 run (Parks kick)
OMAHA BRYAN 26, LINCOLN HIGH 7
Lincoln High 0 7 0 0 - 7
Omaha Bryan 0 7 13 6 - 26
OB-Russell 34 pass from Summerfield (Bustamante kick)
LH-Sher 3 run (Butler kick)
OB-Summerfield 7 run (Bustamante kick)
OB-Russell 8 pass from Summerfield (kick failed)
OB-Morgan 8 run (kick failed)
OMAHA SKUTT 29, NORRIS 13
Norris 0 7 0 6 - 13
Omaha Skutt 12 7 3 7 - 29
OS-Guenther 6 pass from D. Van Dyke (kick failed)
OS-L. Van Dyke 4 pass from D. Van Dyke (kick failed)

OS-Kolega 58 pass from D. Van Dyke (Kolega kick)
NR-Garner 12 pass from Behrends (Greenfield kick)
NR-Kolega 38 kick
NOR-Greenfield 30 kick
OS-Guenther 4 pass from D. Van Dyke (Kolega kick)
NOR-Greenfield 30 kick
SUTTON 30, MCCOOL JUNCTION 28
Sutton 0 8 14 8 - 30
McCool Junction 0 14 8 6 - 28
BENNINGTON 23, WAVERLY 0
Waverly 0 0 0 0 - 0
Bennington 7 7 9 0 - 23
BEN-Bouaphakeo 2 run (Schuman kick)
BEN-Bouaphakeo 5 run (Schuman kick)
BEN-Hill 18 run (Schuman kick)
BEN-Lauridsen sack for safety
MALCOLM 34, NORTH BEND CENTRAL 13
Malcolm 7 13 7 7 - 34
North Bend Central 0 0 7 6 - 13
MAL-Frank 44 run (Meyers kick)
MAL-McGreer 12 pass from Frank (conversion failed)
MAL-Meyer 25 run (Meyers kick)
MAL-Fox 12 pass from Little (Meyers kick)
NBC-Hanis 61 pass (kick good)
NBC-Hanis 20 pass (kick failed)
MAL-Frank 2 run (Meyers kick)

Volleyball

From B1
In the second set, the Islanders were more aggressive with their serves and swings and trailed just 22-19 late in the set.
Then Jackson smashed down a kill on a short slide play, and Reilly had a block on set point for a 25-20 set win.
In the third set, Nebraska brought in transfer outside hitter Taylor Landfair and transfer middle blocker Leyla Blackwell for the first extended time on the court.
“We changed the lineup in the third (set), and we didn’t miss a beat,” Cook said. “Sometimes when we do that it backfires a little bit. I’m really pleased with all of that.”
Landfair had some of those “wow” kills that

Cook has talked about; she finished with five kills on 10 attempts.
“It’s hard coming off the bench,” Cook said. “We’ve been working the last couple of days on (Landfair) really hitting the ball hard, and she swung hard tonight. I think that left-front player is going to be remembering that hit for a while. There’s not many players that can do that.”
Tori Arrington and Kyn-dal Payne had seven kills apiece for A&M-Corpus Christi.
Nebraska plays TCU at 7:30 p.m. Saturday.
In the first match of the Ameritas Players Challenge, TCU defeated Oklahoma in four sets.
Reach the writer at 402-473-7435 or bwagner@journalstar.com. On Twitter @LJSSportsWagner.



KENNETH FERRIERA, JOURNAL STAR

Nebraska's Taylor Landfair (12) hits past Texas A&M-Corpus Christi's Leah Stolfus (7) and Hadley Burger (11) in the third set Friday at the Devaney Sports Center.

Just

From B1
The moment that ended her first time at the line? A net violation up front.
“Sometimes when you get that long of a run, you can start to want to just hit the ball harder and harder and harder,” Reilly said, “but keeping the serve the same every time” is important.
Can some credit go to Devaney’s intimidation and the fact that it was the Islanders’ first match of the season? Sure.
But it wasn’t just that run.
She was back at the line again by the frame’s end — and finished out the set with five more serves. And two of those were aces for a total of five in the first set. Her season-high total in an entire match last year was four.
The three-set rally was scoring era record? Six, done thrice — most recently by Annika Albrecht in 2015 against Rutgers.
She wasn’t the only one recording aces.
Lindsay Krause had one and Lexi Rodriguez had one, too — putting Nebraska at seven total aces, the same number as Nebraska’s hitting errors.

Lindsay Krause’s output
The homegrown senior was dominant in the home opener at the net — terminating 13 kills with two errors on 23 swings for a .478 hitting percentage.
That’s pretty dang good.
Not only that, she was influencing the game in all facets — adding five digs, three



KENNETH FERRIERA, JOURNAL STAR

Texas A&M-Corpus Christi's Katelyn Krienke (22) and Alex Hoglund (16) try to block a hit from Nebraska's Lindsay Krause (22) in the first set on Friday at the Devaney Sports Center.

blocks and an ace. She finished the match with a team-high 16 points.
WHAT I LIKED
Andi Jackson’s swing power
I have one wish. I want someone to clock the speed at which the ball comes off of Andi Jackson’s hand. I mean, someone’s

gotta check the Taraflex for a dent or two or five.
There’s just something different about her. It feels different, especially when you’re in person and you can hear the ball come off her hand — despite the crowd noise and despite the fancy earplugs.
Jackson — who played in all three sets — finished the match with seven kills with one error on 10 swings for a hitting per-

centage of .600.
Bergen Reilly’s aggression at the net
Her evening at the service line was special, but she was back to mid-season form with her dumps.
She finished the match with four kills on five swings for .800.
When opposing defenses have

to factor her into the kills equation too? That makes Nebraska so much harder to try to defend.
Digs for everyone
It wasn’t just Lexi Rodriguez getting after it defensively in the back row.
Every Husker who played in the back row through the first two sets on Friday night had at least two digs.
Hello, Taylor Landfair
The former Big Ten Player of the Year showed why she received the league’s highest honor when she played in the third set on Friday night.
Kill. After kill. After kill.
Landfair had five kills on 10 swings for .500 in her Husker home debut.
Not too shabby.
Leyla Blackwell’s debut
The transfer middle from San Diego didn’t get any playing time on Tuesday, but she came in for Rebekah Allick in the third set against the Islanders.
And on her first swing as a Husker? She terminated the kill for Nebraska’s first point of the third set.
WHAT I LOATHED
Loathed isn’t the right word for it, but Merritt Beason had a night she likely wants back. Six kills with four attack errors on 20 swings for .100. Not her best match.
The next opportunity to bounce back comes quick. Nebraska plays a talented TCU squad on Saturday evening.